



## Visit the Indiana State Library

Everyone is welcome to visit the Library! Staff are available to assist patrons with their research and questions. Librarians with expertise in a variety of fields are on hand to provide guidance and information.

Arrange for a class, club, department, or organization to visit the Library. With advanced notice, staff can provide tours geared toward the research needs of the group and assist the group in preparing for a research visit.

To arrange a tour or research visit for a group call 317-232-3689.

Genealogy Collection  
Indiana State Library  
140 N. Senate Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2296

Phone: 317-232-3689

TDD: 317-232-7763

Web: [www.library.IN.gov](http://www.library.IN.gov)

Email from Web page: Ask-a-Librarian

# Beginning Your Genealogical Research



**Indiana  
State Library**

**[www.library.IN.gov](http://www.library.IN.gov)**

## Genealogy Resources at the Indiana State Library

The Indiana State Library houses one of the major genealogical and local history collections in the Midwest.

The logical place to begin your family history research is the Genealogy Collection. The emphasis of the collection is on Indiana and the regions from which Indiana was settled: New England, the Atlantic Seaboard and the Upland South. We have an extensive collection of print materials, microfiche, microfilm, and CD-ROMs. Our books are in “open stacks” and are available for browsing. The Genealogy Collection’s microform resources are located on the second floor, alongside the extensive collection of microfilmed Indiana newspapers and other resources.

In addition to the Genealogy Collection, there are other useful collections for family history research in the Indiana State Library. For researchers with Hoosier ancestors, the Indiana Collection houses county histories, biographies, alumni magazines, church proceedings, business periodicals, and other printed items that can contain useful biographical information. The Indiana Biography Index lists names of Hoosiers, with citations to the books and periodicals in which their name appeared. In addition, the Indiana Collection houses the Indiana newspaper collection, the largest compilation of Indiana newspapers in the world. The Manuscripts Section has a considerable collection of manuscripts; some of these may provide clues to the time period in which your Hoosier ancestor worked and lived.

The History Reference Room, located on the second floor of the Library, contains many useful books for family historians, with resources from across the United States and from foreign countries. Included are select state rosters of soldiers and sailors serving in World War I, directories of people by profession, British county histories, and more. These materials are all available for browsing and use in the gorgeous reference room, located to the south of the Great Hall.

# How to Begin Your Family History Research

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140 North Senate Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2296  
www.library.IN.gov



## Begin Your Research with Family

Begin by talking to family members, especially those who are older or who have an interest in your family and its history. They may have useful information that can send you on a search for more. See if they have documents, such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, military discharge papers, letters, or diaries. If they do, make copies of the documents for your files.

Have you interviewed your relatives? Talk to your parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Fill out a Family Group sheet and write down the dates of important life events: births, deaths, and marriages. For your convenience, copies of Family Group sheets at available at the Genealogy Collection’s Reference Desk on the first floor of the Library.

## Federal Census Records

Census records are one of the most valuable tools available to family history researchers. We suggest that you start with latest census available to the public (1930) and work your way back. Remember, very little of the 1890 census exists today; most was destroyed by a fire.

There are many clues in the census records which differ from decade to decade such as: the month and year a person was born, date of marriage, if they owned property, if they were naturalized, and what year they came to this country. Beginning with the 1850 census, members of the household are named.

The Library has all available census records for all states, 1790 through 1880 and 1930 on microfilm. We also have census records for the other years for many other states. A chart listing the census records owned by the Library by year and by state is available in the first floor reading room and on our Web site. Census records for every state are available online via the subscription databases, **Ancestry Library Edition** and **HeritageQuest Online**. You may access these databases from any computer in the Library.

## Indiana County Resources and Records

Most information of genealogical value is arranged by county. You may want to start by checking our “historic” card catalog by county. *Please note that materials are arranged by subject in this catalog, not by author or title.* You will also need to check our online catalog for books received after 1976. If you are searching for Indiana county materials, you could also just browse the books on the shelves.

For a quick guide to county sources, the librarians at the Reference Desk have the book, **Indiana Sources for Genealogical Research**. You may also want to begin your research with the WPA Indexes, also known as the “red books”. These are birth, death and marriage indexes for most Indiana counties. Indiana began recording births and deaths beginning in 1882; marriages were recorded from the formation of the county.

Keep in mind that many people born before 1907 (when stricter laws were in place) did not have original birth records. You may need to check other records, such as the federal census, to verify the birth. The Genealogy Collection does not have actual birth & death certificates; those are available from the local health department. The Indiana Department of Health also has death records beginning in 1900 and birth records beginning in 1907.

## The Microforms Collection and the Indiana Collection

All microfilm/microfiche is located on the second floor. The Indiana Collection, which includes city directories, county histories, biographies, manuscripts, and Indiana newspapers, is also located on this floor.

The Genealogy Collection microfilm collection includes marriage records for many counties, census records, deeds, county histories, some church records, some immigration records, and select military records.

## Books for Beginners

The following books provide good overview information for those just beginning their family history research. These are available for use in the Genealogy Collection’s reading room on the first floor of the Library.

Carmack, Sharon DeBartolo. **A Genealogist’s Guide to Discovering Your Female Ancestors: Special Strategies for Uncovering Hard-to-Find Information about Your Female Lineage** (929 C287g)

Croom, Emily Anne. **Unpuzzling Your Past: A Basic Guide to Genealogy** (929 C948u 1995)

Croom, Emily Anne. **The Sleuth Book for Genealogists: Strategies for more Successful Family History Research** (929 C948un)

Crume, Rick. **Plugging into Your Past: How to Find Real Family History Online** (929 C956p)

Dollarhide, William. **The Census Book: A Genealogist’s Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules and Indexes** (929 D665c)

Everton, George B. **The Handybook for Genealogists** (929 E93h10)

Jacobson, Judy. **A Field Guide for Genealogists** (929 J165f)

Johnson, Richard S. **Find Anyone Fast** (929 J68f)

Kemp, Thomas Jay. **Virtual Roots 2.0: A Guide to Genealogy & Local History on the World Wide Web** (929 K32vr 2003)

Pfeiffer, Laura Szucs. **Hidden Sources: Family History in Unlikely Places** (929 P526h)

Robinson, Mona. **Who’s Your Hoosier Ancestor? Genealogy for Beginners** (929 R663w)

Schaefer, Christina Kassabian. **The Hidden Half of the Family: A Sourcebook for Women’s Genealogy** (929 S294h)

Sturdevant, Katherine Scott. **Bringing Your Family History to Life through Social History** (929 S935b)